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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

PARODY AND REFLEXIVITY IN SELECTED WORKS OF GRAHAM GREENE

BY

PAUL LUMSDEN

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 1991

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Date: May 17, 1991

The traditional storytellers still fix you with an Ancient Mariner's eye, and little touches of modernity only give life to old fables.

Graham Greene

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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SUBMITTED BY PAUL LUMSDEN IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS.

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DATE: May 6, 1991

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the nature of parody and discusses selected works of Graham Greene that exemplify the dimensions of parody. In reference to four works written by Graham Greene I discuss the myriad of expressions available to parodic discourse. Each piece reflects something different, yet all serve as examples of the broad scope of parody. The Return of A.J.Raffles and Monsignor Quixote parody specific texts. The parodic elements and their uses are similar in each of these pieces. Doctor Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party relies on a parable as the basis of its parody and The End of the Affair is a self-parody.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
Introduction	1
1. Graham Greene and parody	6
2. Oscar's revenge: The Return of A.J. Raffles	16
3. Monsignor Quixote: meta-parody	33
4. Doctor Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party: a parody parable	52
5. The self-reflexive parody in The End of the Affair	68
6. Conclusion	84
Bibliography	86

Introduction

Graham Greene, as a writer, has ventured into most forms of literature, as well as literary criticism and film, and within each he has continually changed his focus. Criticism about Greene tends to center on his personalized version of Catholicism and politics. However, as the body of criticism about Greene expands, it is necessary to reflect on his diversity and to explore other aspects of his writing than religion or politics. One mode that has appeared in Greene's writing is parody. Greene's The Return of A.J.Raffles, Monsignor Quixote, Doctor Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party and The End of the Affair are parodies or contain parodic elements. These books do not necessarily cover the complete range of Greene's parodic literature but they do illustrate the magnitude of this aspect of his writing.

Individually considered, these works coincide with periods of agitation in Greene's writing, periods during which he was consciously attempting to modify or explore the nature of his writing, and they delineate distinct changes in his style of writing: The End of the Affair was the first of his novels to use a first-person point of view; Doctor Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party

introduces in Greene's writing a pared-down style; Monsignor Quixote shows the potency of Greene's spare style; the play, The Return of A.J.Raffles, demonstrates Greene's breadth as a writer as well as his virtuosity--it also marks his return to drama after a notable absence.

Together these works present the scope of Greene's parodic literature as well as illustrate the diversity of the parodic genre. Before examining these selected works by Graham Greene it is necessary to discuss, separately, the nature of parody and its versatility.

Parody, as Linda Hutcheon says, "is repetition with a critical distance." This definition is vague, yet one that is, upon examination of the genre, conclusive. There are no definitions of parody that are transhistoric and generic. Instead, a definition has to be constructed by looking at the "common denominators to all definitions of parody" (Hutcheon, p. 10).

A parody is an imitation; a writer imitates another writer, but, within the parody of the original is new subject matter which gives the parody a new vision or a previously unexplored perspective. A parody often takes the original text, sometimes changing its form and content, to create an entirely new piece of literature. However, the bonds with the original text are never

severed. Their relationship is such that the parodied text needs the original text to give it meaning for the reader. Parody has multiple levels for literary interpretation, because of its union with another text. Their intertextuality creates something similar to irony or metaphor.

There is another form of parody that distinguishes itself: self-parody, which has different objectives, goals and repercussions. Instead of imitating someone else's writing, the writer reflects himself. By using himself as a parodic model the writer comes to terms with himself rather than a literary heritage.

These approaches illustrate that modern parody is "an important way for modern artists to come to terms with the past" (Hutcheon, p. 101). Self-parody is a way to come to terms not with art and other artists but with the self. Parodic literature such as Monsignor Quixote and The Return of A.J.Raffles shows how Greene incorporates other texts to present a new vision (McLuhan, p. 168). These two books are straight-forward parody. They have a parodic model that is easily identified by a reader and can therefore be readily understood as parody; they are based on specific texts: Don Quixote and Raffles The Amateur Cracksman. With Doctor Fischer of Geneva or The

Bomb Party there is an overt parody of the biblical parable of The Last Supper.

Parody in The End of the Affair is indirect. It is self-reflexive parody. It assumes, as the other texts do, that a reader has a competent knowledge of another text. The text, however, is Graham Greene the writer. There is not a specified text which is being parodied, and to understand what makes it a parody is to understand many of the premises of parody--its history, roots and definitions.

The scope of this thesis will be twofold: first to explore the nature of parody and second to discuss selected works of Graham Greene that exemplify the dimensions of parody.

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Chapter 1

Graham Greene and Parody

Parody is an enigmatic form among literary genres whose antecedents are rooted in classical Greek drama and religious ceremonies. The critic O.M. Freidenberg has noted that:

> [o]bservation of examples of parody shows that its connection with religious rituals and words, or its coincidence with religious feasts, is no accident; for what was originally parodied was precisely what was most sacred--the gods and worship; the transfer of parody to 'the powers that be,' to kings, rulers, all the major civil forms, was secondary. (Freidenberg p. 276)

Even the Romans' literary and artistic consciousness could not imagine a serious form without its comic counterpart. "The serious, straightforward form was perceived as only a fragment, only half of a whole; the fullness of the whole was achieved only upon adding the comic contra-partie of this form. Everything serious had to have, and indeed did have, its comic double" (Bakhtin, p. 138).

Although these lofty beginnings are not indicative of the aims of modern parodic discourse they establish the complexity and seriousness that is associated with a genre usually considered humorous and flippant; aligning parody with its serious counterpart to create something whole illustrates the serious roots of parody as well as the

duality of its definitions. Modern parody can be seen as "one of the ways in which modern artists have managed to come to terms with the weight of the past . . . a search that is . . . firmly based in the search for a tradition" (Hutcheon, p.29). Parody is a way, in effect, to create something whole.

Four approaches can be constructed that help to distinguish what parody is and what the common features of the genre are: semantic, comparative, functional and intertextual.

A semantic approach to parody requires looking at the various definitions that have been constructed to illustrate what it is and what it represents. It soon becomes apparent when one is exploring the definitions of parody that multiple definitions exist. This amorphous, shifting aspect represents the broad range of work that can be interpreted, and that is readily available to be included, as parody.

The etymological meaning offers some inroads into the breadth of parody and the reasons for its association with such a vast array of literature. The prefix "para" has a double meaning. It is usually aligned with the effect of "counter" or "against", but para can also mean "beside." This "distinction between prefix meanings has been used to argue for the existence of both comic and serious types of

parody" (Hutcheon, p. 54). The duality in the root of the word illustrates the reason for such a diversity of possible meanings and uses and explains the consequential misunderstandings.

Parody is a form of imitation. Whether it is serious or humorous, imitation is characterized by ironic inversion and not usually at the expense of the parodied text (Kiremidjian, p. 6). A parody does not imitate in order to denigrate. Instead to "be effective, a parody must be a wilful distortion of the entire form and spirit of the writer, captured at his most typical moment" (Riewald, p. 127). It is a form of admiration. It is able in the process of imitation to assert new life using a familiar and often perennial text. The target of parody is not usually the parodied text (Hutcheon, p. 50). Instead by using someone else's style or technique parodists can "elicit the expectations of their audience for a text, before presenting another in which the parodist may also conceal the meaning of his own" (Rose, p. 21).

To label a work of literature a parody assumes reader familiarity with both the parody and the earlier text it parodies. Similarly, appreciation and understanding of parody requires reader awareness that one text is the imitation of the other. The parodist imitates as closely

as possible "formal conventions of the work being parodied in matters of style, diction, meter, rhythm, vocabulary and the countless other elements subsumed under the word 'form' " (Kiremidjian, p. 16). This is because the subject matter of the primary work is substituted with topics alien to it, creating incongruity in form and content (Kiremidjian, p. 16). This is evident when comparing Cervantes's Don Quixote and Greene's Monsignor Quixote, although Greene does not use the conventions of seventeenth century Spanish. Greene's text substitutes modern Catholicism for chivalry, and by doing so suggests they are very much the same--as well as much more.

Although parody is not completely original in its subject matter, it retains an autonomous distance. The use of another's material as a source for parody creates a "threatening, even anarchic force, one that puts into question the legitimacy of other texts" (Hutcheon, p. 75). Parody can reexamine that text as well as create something completely new, something with a whole new function. Usually it creates something new. With Greene's work, as I will show, malice is not intended nor does Greene threaten the works he parodies. He borrows to create something fresh.

Parody is not usually treated as an autonomous genre, due to its parasitic dependency on another text. It is

often seen as a variant of satire. This association is not correct because a parody has its own agenda (Dane, p. 10). Yet, when they are comparatively examined, the differences between parody and satire are clearly discernible.

Satire as a literary genre points out vices, follies, abuses and stupidities by holding them up for ridicule and contempt. "Satire refers to things; parody refers to words" (Dane, p. 145). Parody has a reliance on another text and it is from that text that it takes its formal qualities. The nature of this reliance is imperative to the reader's understanding. Satire as well relies on a reader's understanding of the situation depicted, but not of a specific text. The overlapping is further disassociated "since the aim of parody is intramural and that of satire extramural--that is, social or moral" (Hutcheon p. 62). However, partial ambiguity between the two genres is evident in "their common use of irony as a rhetorical strategy" (Hutcheon, p. 52).

Parody and satire are often seen as synonymous terms. Their misuse is ubiquitous. They do share one very important element--irony. However "the flaws, errors, and absurdities that parody often reveals in its context (or in the moral implications of its form) are satiric" (Hutcheon, p. 78). This perhaps partially explains why

parody is often seen as an element or part of satire.

Irony is a means of creating, through subtle and sometimes sarcastic methods, a new level of meaning.

> The term irony generally describes a statement of an ambiguous character, which includes a code containing two (or more) messages, one of which is the message of the ironist to his 'initiated' audience, and the other the 'ironically meant' decoy message. In the parody the complex function of the dual meaning is sometimes matched by that of the dual text--and while the ironist may use parody to confuse his meaning, the parodist may also use various forms of irony (Rose, p. 51).

Parody and irony function on two levels: the surface level and an implied level. Meaning and understanding are found in the context (Hutcheon, p. 34). However both parody and irony "require that the decoder construct a second meaning through inferences about surface statements and supplement the foreground with acknowledgment and knowledge of a background context" (Hutcheon, p. 34).

The irony in parody is revealed only in the knowledge a reader brings to the texts and for a complete experience knowledge of the primary text is therefore essential. It is essential because the "pleasure of parody's irony comes not from humor in particular but from the degree of engagement of the reader in the intertextual 'bouncing' between complicity and distance" (Hutcheon, p. 32). This relationship is often called intertextuality.

The reader's interpretation depends on

intertextuality: that is "the recognition of a frame, a context that allows the reader to make sense out of what he or she might otherwise perceive as senseless" (Plottel, p. xix). The tension between the known text and the new text creates a dual function from which parody creates its strength. It sometimes creates exaggeration (Kennedy, p. 161).

> The reception of the parody, and the possibilities for its reception by the reader, are thus of particular importance to a theory of parody. The parody may be said to contain at least two (connected) models of communication--that between parodist and reader. In brief, the work to be parodied is decoded by the parodist and offered again (encoded) in a distorted form to another decoder, the reader, who--knowing and having previously decoded the original--is in a position to compare it to its new form in the parody (Rose, p.26).

Understanding the intertextuality between two texts requires a sophisticated reader. This has often been cited as one of the shortcomings of parodic literature.

The function of parody is not to represent nature but to reflect and mirror other art forms or works. A parodic work makes one aware that it is not concerned with "the ideas, processes or 'objects' of nature; its concern is wi[th] the form-content relationship of the original, and it will exploit any incongruity between form and content" (Kiremidjian, p. 6). Moreover, parody is not always considered art but, rather, an imitation of other art. Parody "holds the mirror not up to nature but to another

work of art, and thus becomes a reflection of the character of art itself" (Kiremidjian, p. 18).

Parody can function as criticism because of its reflective nature. It has other qualities that suggest it is criticism as well:

> It is grounded on objective analysis of a specific work or works. It seeks to contribute something to the knowledge and understanding thereof. It implies evaluation of the original text. It sends its readers back to that text. Finally parody, by its very nature, is prevented from going off on genetic and affective tangents. (Davis, p. 181)

The function of parody also contains a stabilizing element. It draws on the past or another text and shows the interdependency of art and its understanding. The "instability of parody becomes the means of stabilizing subject matter which is itself instable and fluid, and parody becomes a major mode of expression for a civilization in a state of transition and flux" (Kiremidjian, p. 38).

Whether it is examined from a semantic, comparative, functional or intertextual perspective, parody is a means of creating new levels of meaning, but primarily it is a means of a modern artist coming to terms with the past. Self parody is a way to come to terms with the self. All these approaches are enclosed in Linda Hutcheon's definition of parody: "repetition with critical distance."

In reference to four works of Greene I shall discuss the myriad of expressions available to parodic discourse. Each piece reflects something different, yet all serve as examples of the broad scope of parody. The Return of A.J.Raffles and Monsignor Quixote parody specific texts. The parodic elements and their uses are similar in each of these pieces. There is repetition with a critical distance. Doctor Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party relies on a parable as the basis of its parody and The End of the Affair is a self-parody.

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Chapter Two

The Return of Raffles or Avenging Oscar

*

> Sometimes he [Greene's Father] took a winter holiday alone in Egypt or in France or Italy with a friend, Mr. George, a clergyman and headmaster. They remained very formal through all the years, calling each other by their surnames, though naturally George has a less formal sound than Greene. I think their holidays were more intellectual than convivial, for I remember my father naming some place in France visited many years before and saying to his friend, 'You remember, George, that was where we drank a bottle of wine.' Once--it was Naples--they had a curious encounter. A stranger hearing them speak in English asked whether he might join them over coffee. There was something familiar and to them vaguely disagreeable about his face, but he kept them charmed by his wit for more than an hour before he said good-bye. They didn't exchange names even at parting and he left them to pay for his drink which was certainly not coffee. It was some while before they realized in whose company they had been. The stranger was Oscar Wilde, who not very long before had been released from prison. 'Think,' my father would always conclude his story, 'how lonely he must have been to have expended so much time and wit on a couple of schoolmasters on holiday'. It never occurred to him that Wilde was paying for his drink in the only currency he had. (Greene, A Sort of Life, p. 22)

*

In contrast to the prolific critical assessment of the novels of Graham Greene, his plays are largely ignored. Why? It is not their lack of quality that prevents their examination or that they are just the reiteration of themes found in the novels, but instead it

can be assumed that the novels simply overshadow the plays. He has written eight plays, five are full length and three are one act-plays. They are as diverse in their themes as the novels.

The Return of A.J.Raffles is one of the plays that even in spite of sparse critical attention has elicited some of the most diverse assessments. This perhaps is due to the play's humorous treatment of homosexuality. "Much of the humor comes from the ironic conflict between 'normal' morality and 'homo' morality with the latter coming out a bit ahead" (Choice, p. 980). However my view is that the ironic treatment of homosexuality underlies the misunderstanding surrounding the play.

The Return of A.J.Raffles is an "entertainment," to revive a now defunct term. This is evident in its lighthearted tone and its treatment of characters. The play marks the return of Greene to the stage after an eleven year hiatus between 1964 and 1975. His previous plays were more serious in their subject matter and often thematically theological. Raffles is set in a period that "acquired a reputation for its loose morals and decadence. As if they heard the thunder of the approaching world war, many adults shed their responsibilities to become like children again, acting out the final play of innocence" (Kelly, p. 177).

The Return of A.J.Raffles is a parody of Hornung's novel, Raffles the Amateur Cracksman. It repeats elements from the book but with a critical difference. It mimics the characters of the book, exaggerating some of their physical traits and characteristics, only to make an indictment of how Oscar Wilde was treated. It uses art as the basis of this attack. The parodic relationship between the book and the play is straight-forward and obvious, and not as complicated or as far-reaching as other forms of parody. What is evident and most noticeable in this relationship are the added dimensions in the play, such as the twists in the plot and the added characters, Lord Alfred and the King. Greene blends reality and fiction together, using characters and events from the near past as well as the fictitious past.

Hornung's characters have been resurrected, as Lord Alfred desires, to avenge Oscar Wilde. This single motif provides the basis for the play: every action in the play is motivated and precipitated by this one thought. Greene ironically scrapes off any Victorian veneer and makes all the logic of the play revolve around avenging Oscar Wilde. The leading characters are homosexual and this point of view is portrayed as the norm. Even lines not intended as references to homosexuality are wrought with homosexual connotations:

> Inspector: A.J.Raffles! Come back from the deid. It's lak an answer to prayer. Many a time I've prayed to the guid God to let me put my hands on you (p. 304).

Ironic and humorous overtones are found in virtually every line of the play. The language of the play is full of humor and sexual innuendo, in its dual tribute to Oscar Wilde and Hornung. Morality, disguise, gossip and loyalty provide the causes for the character's actions for the first act, as they do for the remainder of the play. Morality is, as Lord Alfred says, "one of those things I've never been able to keep up with. It changes more quickly than the shape of one's lapels" (p. 281).

Act one opens with Lord Alfred and Bunny making some final preparations to their attire before going out for the evening. In the process they casually discuss their estranged companions, Raffles who is presumed dead and Oscar who was in the "chokie" with Bunny but is now living in France. Bunny and Bosie are drawn together by their mutual knowledge of Oscar, but Lord Alfred (Bosie) is quick to establish the tone of their relationship. He says:

> I can't go with you to Covent Garden if you are wearing that thing. But for you I'll give up the Criterion. Stephen is beginning to bore me. He has developed a hideous taste for pink champagne. It makes me think he has secret connections with women. I begin to love you, Bunny. No, no, don't moue at me. Like a brother of course. Ever since Oscar went to chokie I've discovered a strong interest in the criminal classes. Wouldn't you sometimes like to

return to a life of crime? (p. 274)

Raffles appears disguised as the persistent, runny-nosed Mackenzie, asks to have "just a wee word or two, but I mickle doubt if you'd want them spoken in public" (p. 277), and then ironically affronts Lord Alfred, saying:

> Ah weel, Lord Alfred, I hae a likin' for straight forword crime. It's cleaner than muckin' aboot wi'boys (p. 279).

He leaves the room to let Lord Alfred and Bunny discuss the possibility of getting retribution for Oscar. Raffles, as the detective, overhears, and returns. After making the two nervous he removes his disguise and agrees to help Lord Alfred and the joyous Bunny steal from Queensberry.

In act two a lesbian liaison is suggested between Lady Alice and her maid. Alice is the mistress of the prince. The stage directions say:

> She is quite naked now. The maid approaches her, carrying the dressing-grown, but stops a moment before draping it over her to look at her mistress with admiration.

During this scene, Raffles and Bunny are behind the curtain watching. The lady leaves the dressing room and the two come out to discuss the essence of the arousal they are experiencing:

> Raffles: It's not the young woman is it, Bunny? Tell me the truth. I grant you she has the slenderlanks of a young fawn.

Bunny: What a fool you are, A.J.! Have I ever looked twice at a woman?

Raffles: Well, I thought that you looked rather more than twice from behind the curtain.

Bunny: First you were jealous of Bosie, and now--this female object.

Raffles: I've been occasionally attracted by a female object myself. In the absence of a good chef, Bunny, they serve to warm the soup... She would have made a nice choirboy if she had cut off all that redundant hair. (p. 294)

The critic A.A. DeVitis, has pointed out that this striptease is more than it first appears to be: "as Alice's skirts and corsets fall to the floor, she is revealed in all her flesh and fragility; as her Victorian costume falls away, her unaccommodated humanity speaks to our times as eloquently as it did to hers" (DeVitis, p. 165). The striptease, visually presented on stage, parodically contrasts the homosexual innuendo spoken by most of the other characters in the play. Alice's nudity draws attention to the clandestine, double standards of sexual morality, both in the present and in the past. Her disrobing illustrates both literally and metaphorically the sexual disguises of the status quo.

After this scene the prince enters; the prince intervenes to restore priorities and focus. He sincerely respects Raffles for his role in fighting the Boer war and admonishes Queensberry for his lack of participation. He

is able to see beyond physical merits and sexual preferences to the quality of the person. He says:

> I forgot, Queensberry, that while England has been fighting the Boers, you have been fully engaged fighting Mr. Oscar Wilde. (p. 304)

Gossip, second-hand supposition, is a theme running throughout the play. In act two the audience learns of an attempt to purloin the prince's love letters, the ones written to Alice. Inadvertently Bunny takes these letters when he takes the gold box they were kept in, thinking instead of the potential wealth of the box and not of the damage the letters could cause to the reputation of the Prince. In a sardonic twist Greene has a German spy blunder in an attempt at stealing these "badly written" letters.

In act three Von Blixen, the spy, arrives at the Albany and introduces himself to Bunny, whom he presumes is a spy as well but a very incompetent one. Lord Alfred is waiting at the Albany and readily willing to provide Bunny with an alibi, in case he needs it:

> Lord Alfred: No, I owe you an alibi. Put on your pyjamas and lend me a pair. We both spent the night here.
>
> Bunny: And go to prison like Wilde? I prefer felony. They treat felony better. I suppose everyone, even a judge, has stolen something in his time, if only a woman, but sodomy is beyond his imagination. (p. 308)

In accordance with the integrity among spies and because

Von Blixen is caught by the Prince, Raffles and detective Mackenzie, too, are made to strip "to remove what our great writer Mr. Henry James has called 'the nether integuments of a gentleman'" (p. 317). Their undressing parallels the strip scene in act two. In another way it acts as a reminder of the artificial covering surrounding people in a physical and moralistic sense.

The resolution to the play however is not contingent on removing one's clothes or, as Raffles says, "the absurd appearance of being reduced to one's combinations" (p. 318). Instead the plot is untangled and resolved in favor of the avenging of Oscar, whose situation is kept in mind throughout the course of the play. As final retribution, Queensberry is presumed accidently killed, though he is not. As with Raffles, he is resurrected only to be sent to "St.James's Hospital . . . for Diseases of the skin and Venereal Infections." Queensberry is given a fitting end, to suffer with those who have contracted a social disease --one of those diseases which seriously affect physical appearance, one which he found morally reprehensible and most noticeable.

The play is a parody and meant to be seen within this context. It "is a form of imitation, but imitation characterized by ironic inversion, [which is] not always at the expense of the parodied text" (Hutcheon, p. 6). It

is modeled on a specific work and author, Raffles The Amateur Cracksman by Ernest William Hornung.

Greene, after seeing a production called The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes in 1974, and in response to its success, decided to resurrect Raffles (Goetz, p. 160). It was not the first attempt to dramatize Raffles. Hornung along with Eugene Wiley Presbrey wrote a play based on the character of Raffles. This play was performed in New York (1903) and in London (1906). Whether Greene knew of these performances is speculation. His play, he says on the title page is "loosely based on Hornung's characters in The Amateur Cracksman" (Greene, p. 176).

Martin Esslin was the first critic to suggest that The Return of A.J.Raffles was not just "a fantasy that succeeds for those who are willing to accept frivolity and insouciance as ends in themselves" (DeVitis, p. 163). Esslin writes:

> Graham Greene's Raffles is nostalgic pastiche, but none the worse for that. For lovingly tongue-in-cheek parody is a far more conscious, deliberate genre than naive melodrama, it operates on more and subtler levels of irony and reflectiveness.
>
> Those daily critics who, in their usual carping--and utterly humorless--way, berated Graham Greene for not providing a more ingenious thriller-plot were accordingly, as is their wont, barking up the entirely wrong tree. If the plot had been more ingenious, the play would have been less frothy, less light-heartedly rambling, less of the delightful entertainment which it triumphantly proved to be.

> By lovingly reconstructing the late Victorian milieu, moreover, Graham Greene is enabled to say a great deal, indirectly, about his own time by contrast as well as tragic irony. In the figure of the ageing Prince of Wales on the eve of becoming Edward VII he finds a brilliant spokesman for much that needs to be said about the virtues of his society and, by implication, the barbarisms of ours. And at the same time he enables us, enlightened, liberated denizens of a 'permissive' age to laugh about the barbarisms of that period, its naive patriotism, imperialism, love and sport and stuffiness. (Esslin, p. 30)

Martin Esslin succinctly captures the essence of Greene's parody: it is more an indictment of the present than a reflection of the past where it is set. Borges wrote that "every writer creates his own precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future. In this correlation the identity or plurality of men involved is unimportant" (Plottel, p. vii). Using homosexuality as a vehicle to ridicule modern homophobia, as well as other themes, Greene parodies Ernest William Hornung's Raffles The Amateur Cracksman to reflect a world, as Raffles and Lord Alfred suggest, that would avenge Oscar Wilde. It revises the past in a parodic manner.

The nature of parody creates a juxtaposition "in which the more recent work ironically re-presents selected elements of its antecedent" (Kennedy, p. 161). Greene chooses the relationship of Raffles and Bunny for the centrifugal action of his play. The reception of the text

by the reader assumes certain expectations, most importantly knowledge of both texts. Unavoidably, this points to a weakness in parodic discourse. It is a necessity that an audience know, at least vaguely, the stories of Raffles.

Parody, to succeed, requires and assumes a knowledge of both texts to understand the humor. The often resultant comic effect "introduces into the definition of parody the question of the role played by the reader in the reception of the parodist's text, and in the parodist's evocation of certain expectations in his readers by the quotation of a text" (Rose, p. 20). Intertextuality, in this sense, is the key to fully understanding and appreciating what Greene has created in Raffles.

Intertextuality is the recognition of context that permits the reader to make sense out of what might otherwise be perceived as senseless (Plottel, p. xix). Setting up Raffles and Bunny as possible lovers in the play humorously reflects back onto the book. In the book Bunny is always jealous of Raffles' triumphs in crime and with women, but Raffles never comes right out and says he is--Greene's play does. It is a joke only to those with the knowledge of both works.

The book upon which Greene loosely bases his play

warrants discussion if one is to appreciate the disposition of Greene's parody. Knowledge of both texts is critical to full enjoyment and appreciation of the irony in parody. As J.G. Riewald suggests, effective parody is a "wilful distortion of the entire form and spirit of the writer, captured at his most typical moment" (Riewald, p. 127). A large part of the pleasure and the humor is not within a particular text, but comes instead from the "engagement of the reader in the intertextual 'bouncing' between complicity and distance" between the two texts (Hutcheon, p. 32). Moreover, it is the incongruous juxtaposition of texts and the reader's expected preparation that provides the greatest source of humor and enjoyment of parody. As Margaret Rose points out, this is the essence of humor according to Kant: to raise "the expectations for X and giving Y" (Rose, p. 23).

Greene uses only Hornung's characters and does not use any of Hornung's stories as the bases for his play. A new dimension, resulting in the creation of a new vision, is added to the play by his use of real people as well as the fictitious Bunny and Raffles.

The brother-in-law of Arthur Conan Doyle, Hornung, created Raffles as a counterpart to the more intellectual Sherlock Holmes. Hornung was induced to write upon seeing the success of Sherlock Holmes. <u>The Amateur</u>

Cracksman is, as Arthur Conan Doyle suggested, the inversion of Sherlock Holmes. Both books and the subsequent characters are involved in crime. Holmes is a detective. Both characters have loyal companions--Raffles has Bunny and Holmes has Watson. The similarities dissipate upon further comparison. Raffles is a thief and legends were made out of his conquests. He successfully evaded capture and was able to elude the persistent Scottish detective Mackenzie, for the duration of his criminal life. Bunny was not so fortunate.

Raffles, The Amateur Cracksman is a series of short stories told from Bunny's perspective. But instead of seeing and becoming involved with the psyche of Raffles as the title of the book would suggest, the reader participates in the execution of felonies. The reader is not privy to the deductions or solutions to the crimes, but rather to Bunny's neurotic and criminally incompetent perspective.

The first story begins with Bunny's pleas to his old school friend, Raffles, for help. He threatens to kill himself if Raffles spurns him. This act of desperation precipitates their unique and mutually dependent relationship. Greene uses the precarious nature of their relationship in the play to infer the characters' homosexuality. The book refrains from making this an

issue but there are times the reader could question or suspect Bunny's jealousy towards Raffles and female characters.

Bunny's naivete and perpetual unawareness of Raffles' escapades are characteristic. Repeatedly in the book Bunny misapprehends how or why Raffles executes a crime. Comparatively examined, Bunny is but a peon for Raffles the criminal genius capable of committing any crime without detection. He, however, needs an audience, an admirer, to respect his criminal genius. He has other qualities that Bunny aggrandizes; including the fact that Raffles is a celebrated cricket player. Committing crimes and playing cricket for Raffles stem from the same passions; he enjoys both for the excitement of the pursuit and the execution. He wears costumes for both activities --disguises to help conceal the various crimes he commits; uniforms to consolidate his cricket-playing status.

These elements, the characters and their peculiar characteristics, are what Greene borrows for The Return of A.J. Raffles. He is not concerned with the stories, but with the method which they are told. Greene retains for the play very general characteristics of Hornung's original, but perhaps the element that caught Greene's attention is Hornung's use of language. It is witty prose, replete with self-conscious references. For

example, in Hornung's book Raffles is described by Bunny as "a man [who] might have been a minor poet instead of an athlete of first water" (p. 11). Further, Bunny is appalled at Raffles' casual approach to robbing: "[h]e could think of Keats on his way from a felony! He could hanker for his fireside like another!" (p. 31). "The Gift of the Emperor" points to the literary self-conscious style Hornung used. Bunny, who is a journalist, and Raffles are discussing Bunny's recent articles:

> I had written for money because I really needed it. . . . It was no easy matter to keep your end up as raw freelance of letters; for my part, I was afraid I wrote neither well enough nor ill enough for success. I suffered from a persistent ineffectual feeling after style. Verse I could manage; but it did not pay. To personal paragraphs and the baser journalism I could not and I would not stoop. (206)

Raffles, The Amateur Cracksman is essentially entertainment. It takes a reader through the felonious escapades of a gentleman thief and his insecure but willing accomplice, Bunny. They were a very successful literary duo and worthy of Graham Greene's parodic compliment.

Greene's parodic play uses irony to maintain poetic justice. It avenges Oscar, as Lord Alfred requested. It deals with morality, disguise, gossip and loyalty, all of which stem from Hornung's book but in a new vision. Without the audience's awareness of Hornung's book and

characters, a great deal is lost. It is imperative to parody to understand the relationship between the play and the book: how it functions and how they differ. Greene maintains the relationship between Bunny and Raffles as ambiguous. Nowhere in the play is it mentioned that Bunny and Raffles are lovers, but the suggestions and possibilities are everywhere as they are in Hornung's book.

It is evident as well that parody is able to reach and respond on various levels. In isolation the play is treated as frivolous and without focus or purpose. It is dependent on the book for much of its context but it creates its own entertaining agenda and, much more importantly, it acts as a compliment to another writer. Parody in one sense is a means not only for understanding the past but also for paying tribute to it.

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Chapter Three

Monsignor Quixote: Meta-Parody

*

> "Do you think that the Monsignor's ancestor really represented the chivalry of Spain? Oh, it may have been his intention, but we all make cruel parodies of what we intend."

*

Unlike its parodic antecedent, Monsignor Quixote is a short novel. It, too, is not like Greene's earlier novels, although perhaps similar in breadth to Dr.Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party with its parable-like nature and sparse style. Monsignor Quixote is a parody of a parody and most critical observations of this relationship focus on what Greene chooses to use of the original and what he chooses to ignore. Converging on this aspect of Monsignor Quixote draws attention to the parasitic nature of parody which "is rarely accorded the degree of autonomy enjoyed by other genres. Not only is it seen as dependent on its target or object genres, but also it is seen as a variant of other official genres, the most important of these being satire" (Dane, p. 10). This bias leads the reader astray and away from the issues portrayed in the novel. Parody is a new vision. It is a selective process that uses the original text in a new manner.

Patrick Henry suggests that Monsignor Quixote "contains none of the narrative intricacies of Cervantes . . . none of the 'baroque' elements [and a]t the psychological level, there are no mimetic triangles and no doubles or sets of doubles that reflect the behavior of the main protagonists"(Henry, p. 12). Obviously, he is correct. The issues he points out are not in Greene's novel because Monsignor Quixote and Don Quixote are not the same book. Monsignor Quixote is a parody of Cervantes's masterpiece. As is the case with most parodic literature a parody is the distortion of the whole form and spirit of the writer, captured at his most ordinary moment. A parody is not a mirror reflection of the orginal. Attempting to determine and isolate the minute differences is but to ignore the singular important premise of parody:

> Parody is a kind of literary mimicry which retains the form or stylistic character of the primary work, but substitutes alien subject matter or content. The parodist proceeds by imitating as closely as he can the formal conventions of the work being parodied in matters of style, diction, meter, rhythm, vocabulary and the countless other elements subsumed under the word "form". But at the same time he substitutes subject matter, or content, or in an Aristotelian context actions or objects, which are entirely alien to that form. He thus established a jarring incongruity between form and content. (Kiremidjian, p. 16)

Greene's novel cannot use all of the formal

conventions of a seventeenth-century Spanish novel, such as diction or vocabulary without alienating the vast majority of his readers. Greene substitutes for the world of chivalric knights the world of the Catholic Church. Not only does he create a new vision in the process but he creates another level of literary intrigue: meta-parody. Monsignor Quixote is a parody of a parody and within the novel there is a self-conscious, self-reflexive preoccupation with its own nature and capacity to be an independent piece of literature. Greene's novel uses Cervantes's story in a very general appreciative manner.

Cervantes's story may not be short, but it can easily be told, in an abridged version, to refresh the memories of those who have not recently encountered it.

Don Quixote has an idle life and consequently he reads books on knight errantry to pass the time.

> In short, he so buried himself in his books that he spent the nights reading from twilight till daybreak and the days from dawn till dark; and so from little sleep and much reading, his brain dried up and he lost his wits. (p. 32)

He decides to become a knight errant. He renames his horse, Rocinante, to exemplify his knightly stature; he invents a lady to provide his knightly impetus; and he leaves his idle lifestyle "to wait no longer before

putting his ideas into effect" (p. 35). His first venture is to be knighted, but he soon returns home because of his shortage of money. He did not bring money because the books of knighthood never mention how the knights procure their means of support. He returns home only to discover that his niece, his housekeeper and the priest are burning his books, blaming them for Don Quixote's peculiar behavior. The Don, meanwhile, uses this sojourn to get monetary and personal support. He absconds with his neighbor, Sancho Panza, promising as was the "custom much in use among knight errant of old to make their squires governors of the isles or kingdoms they won" (p. 67).

Sancho is not a quick-witted man, but he realizes his master is crazy. Nevertheless he willingly indulges Don Quixote in his escapades. Don Quixote fights windmills, thinking they are giants; he rescues damsels in distress; and for the duration of the first part of the book, he lives by the rules of knight errantry which he is thoroughly convinced have validity in his society.

The book for the most part is about the world of reality and the world of imagination or Romance. Cervantes uses reality to deflate the idealizing world of Romance. In contrast, Don Quixote's determined idealism becomes admirable in conjunction with the world's

sordidness. Not only are there elements of reversal and paradox but the book raises questions about values. Don Quixote tries, with limited success to reassert the chivalric code. Throughout the book he heroically defends his beliefs and in doing so prompts the reader to question the hero's delusions: are they acts of madness or actions "performed out of their sense of beauty and excitement, not for the sake of their usefulness" (Mack, p. 1678)? Don Quixote is eventually cured of his madness, while Sancho resumes the humble life he was leading before he left for the world of adventure.

Monsignor Quixote, although it parodies Cervantes, is a new vision. It is a picaresque novel about a humble priest and a communist mayor who take a vacation together across Spain. The bond between the mayor and the Monsignor is founded on their mutual scepticism, at least in the first part of the novel. For example:

> It was only a dream, of course it was only a dream, but none the less Father Quixote had felt on waking the chill of despair felt by a man who realizes suddenly that he has taken up a profession which is of use to no one, who must continue to live in a kind of Saharan desert without doubt or faith, where everyone is certain that the same belief is true. He had found himself whispering,'God save me from such a belief.' Then he heard the Mayor turn restlessly on the bed beside him, and he added without thought, 'Save him too from belief,' and only then he fell asleep again. (p. 77)

Father Quixote is prodigiously promoted to Monsignor, much

to the chagrin of the local bishop, after helping the bishop of Motopa with his debilitated car. Father Quixote solves the problem by filling an empty gastank with gasoline. The mayor, who has been recently defeated in an election, willingly agrees to accompany the Father on a vacation. Their first stop is to buy a pair of purple socks and a purple pechera for the Monsignor. This is to avoid suspicion and arrest since Spain is still suffering under the lingering Franco's dictatorship and they assume they will have protection wearing these vestments.

Humorous incidents arise throughout the novel because of the naive nature of the priest, like the naive character he parodies. He has never been outside of his parish, except when he was studying for the priesthood. In stark contrast to his sheltered past that has been lived in his small parish, the mayor takes him to a brothel for lodgings. Father Quixote goes to a pornographic movie, thinking it is pious because of its title: A Maiden's Prayer. He hears a confession in a lavatory. Throughout the novel Father Quixote is like an innocent child, "who free from sexual constraints, express[es] [his] love simply and directly and who do[es] not experience guilt or anxiety in [his] relationships with others" (Kelly, p. 105). Like Don Quixote, Monsignor

Quixote's naivete hovers between innocence and foolishness --both turn everyday values upside down.

Father Quixote is eventually taken home and locked-up, because his behavior has attracted some attention and his bishop is concerned. Quixote, however, escapes and goes with the mayor to Galicia. While there he gets into more trouble. Corrupt priests are allowing villagers to bid on the right to carry the Virgin in a procession during a feast and the Monsignor, in disgust, stops and says:

> 'Give me my perchera. It's behind you under the window. My collar too.'
>
> He got out of the car and a small group gathered in the street to watch him dress. He felt like an actor who is watched by his friends in his dressing-room.
>
> 'We are going into battle, Sancho. I need my armour. Even if it is as absurd as Mambrino's helmet.' (p. 225)

He causes a riot, while heading for a monastery, and is shot by the police. In a state of delirium, he says mass without the necessary physical implements such as the chalice and host. Notwithstanding his lack of apparatus, he does emotionally affect the mayor:

> The Mayor didn't speak again before they reached Orense; an idea quite strange to him had lodged in his brain. Why is it that the hate of man--even of a man like Franco--dies with his death, and yet love, the love which he had begun to feel for Father Quixote, seemed now to live and grow in spite of the final silence--for how long, he wondered with a kind of fear, was it possible for that love of his to

continue? And to what end? (p. 256)

In Monsignor Quixote, Greene makes use of parody within parody. He is using as his imitation another work which is acknowledged as a parody itself. This meta-parody or parody of parody, as is the relationship between these two texts, produces an irony that would otherwise be unavailable. The act of imitating another work of art rather than imaging a new situation, brings with it used and tested assumptions. For example, a reader familiar with Cervantes' novel will no doubt approach Greene's novel with expectations of the familiar. It is through manipulation of the familiarities that parody is most potent.

Throughout the novel Monsignor Quixote is aware of his fictitious heritage. The Bishop of Motopo and the Father discuss the issue after the Father fixes the Bishop's car. He adds gas to the empty fuel tank:

> In the Church we have need of men of practical abilities too . . . . We are here to bring sinners to repentance and there are more sinners among the bourgeois than among peasants. I would like you to go forth like your ancestor Don Quixote on the high roads of the world . . . .
>
> They called him a madman, Monsignor.
>
> So many said of St. Ignatius. But here is one high road I have to take and here is my Mercedes . . .
>
> He was a fiction, my bishop says, in the mind of a writer . . .

> Perhaps we are all fictions, father, in the mind of God.
>
> Do you want me to tilt at windmills? (p. 24)

Greene has created an ironic parallel. Don Quixote loved his books of knight errantry. He fought and died for the values presented in those books. Greene's Monsignor is a Catholic priest. His books are "his breviary, the New Testament, a few tattered volumes of a theological kind, the relics of his studies, and some works by his favorite saints" (p. 15). Spurling, a critic of Graham Greene, has noted that "Cervantes . . . took a dim view of his foolish hero's romantic reading-matter, whereas Greene wholly approves of his priest and his priest's books" (Spurling, p. 52). He is, as the communist mayor Sancho says, "a monsignor errant and [he] must wear purple socks" (p. 43). The character of the Monsignor carries with him the connotations evoked by being a parody. Books of knighthood were considered outdated and merely indicative of a fanciful world of myth. These connotations, too, are transferred in the parody to the books of the priest and perhaps the teachings of the Catholic church--to accept the church is quixotic.

Don Quixote, imbued with knightly ideology, bravely battles with windmills and sheep all the time thinking they were something else, something potentially life

threatening; Monsignor Quixote, imbued with Christian ideology, naively leaves his parish to test his faith.

Cervantes's novel reveals its own meta-fictional qualities as does Greene's novel. Greene may be subject to criticism for not using to his advantage all aspects of the text he parodies. This is not the case, nor is it the goal of parody to faithfully mimic or distort the original text entirely. There exists a fine line between the two texts, one that "should be able to combine admiration with laughter" (Riewald, p. 128).

Created in the combinations of circumstance and the parallels between the two novels is an area of intertextuality. It is an area loaded with connotations, where little is stated outright, where many things can be inferred. However, the parodic associations are less offensive. Margaret A. Rose has noted that:

> the work to be parodied is decoded by the parodist and offered again (encoded) in a distorted form to another decoder, the reader, who--knowing and having previously decoded the original--is in a position to compare it to its new form in the parody. (p. 26)

The reader, by the act of reading, is observing a fictional character and within the realms of creative fiction Greene is able to create an offspring of Cervantes. Bringing with him many of the assumptions made about the original text, Don Quixote, the reader is

prepared for Monsignor Quixote.

It is impossible to imagine Graham Greene's book without Cervantes's classic in the background as a paradigm. This juxtaposition in which the more recent work ironically re-presents selected elements of its antecedent points to the humor. Monsignor Quixote provides the ideal opportunity for intertextual "bouncing" as described by Linda Hutcheon and the resultant humor (Hutcheon, p.32). When a reader knows the essence of Cervantes's book, Greene's book is given new textures and a new level of meaning. For example, the naive yet fervent holding of ideas by Monsignor Quixote is characteristic of the ideas and values held by his predecessor Don Quixote.

By using Cervantes's classic novel, Greene evokes ironic suggestions. He suggests "that anyone who goes about the world behaving as Christ and his true followers did is liable to seem mad and dangerous to most people, but especially so to the princes and bureaucrats of the Catholic Church" (Spurling, p. 52). Greene, according to Margaret A. Rose, uses a

> technique used by many parodists to elicit the expectations of their audience for a text, before presenting another in which the parodist may also conceal the meaning of his own. Thus parody may also use dissimulation to achieve its critical ends, but in such parody the target text may either be the object of satire or a mask used primarily to allow

> other targets to be attacked in a covert manner, where direct criticism might run the danger of bringing down censorship (or libel suit) onto the parodist, or where the parodist may in fact wish to defend the parodied text as having been reduced to parody by its imitation by other writers or poetasters, or by the misreadings of readers or critics. (Rose, p. 21)

Greene deflects any direct assault on his religous stance by relying on his readers to come to the same view as a result of the readers' experience with the parodied text. Readers familiar with Cervantes will have expectations which are derived from their familiarity with the story and the actions of the main characters when they read Monsignor Quixote. Presumably the most famous image will be that of Don Quixote battling with the windmills. Most readers are also familiar with the reasons he went on his adventure--books. Or as the Bishop of Motopa tells the Monsignor about reading Cervantes's book, "I have never got beyond the first chapter" (p. 13), implying that the reader need only have a very general knowledge of Cervantes's novel.

Books gain more importance as Greene's novel proceeds. The choice of reading material, and books themselves, are debated constantly by the communist mayor and the Monsignor. Books become the impetus of their adventure. Critics often see this as Monsignor Quixote's shortcoming, calling it "a debate between two beliefs,

between rational humanism and Roman Catholicism" (O'Prey, p. 150). This is not entirely true. Greene stresses books, as did Cervantes, to illustrate the theme of his novel--the nature of fact and fiction, which is more relevant? For example, Monsignor Quixote and the mayor discuss the nature of their books:

> 'In return for Father Jone I will lend you Father Lenin. Perhaps he will give you hope too'
>
> 'Hope in this world perhaps, but I have a greater hunger--and not for myself alone. For you, Sancho, and all our world. I know I'm a poor priest errant, travelling God knows where. I know that there are absurdities in some of my books as there were in the books of chivalry my ancestors collected. That didn't mean that all chivalry was absurd. Whatever absurdities you can dig out of my books I still have faith...
>
> 'In what?'
>
> 'In a historic fact. That Christ died on the Cross and rose again.'
>
> 'The greatest absurdity of all.'
>
> 'It's an absurd world or we wouldn't be here together.' (p. 86)

Greene, as Georg Gaston points out:

> juxtaposes the Gospel with the Communist Manifesto, Torquemada with Stalin, the Roman Curia with the Politbureau, and the Opus Dei with the Guardia Civil of Spain. Each time, an inherent lesson becomes clear. The lines between various beliefs and their excrescences, and finally even between fact and fiction, are very fine, if they exist at all. This realization--that truth is ambiguous and depends on an appreciation of paradox--leads to wisdom. (Gaston,p.136)

One may also add to this that wisdom leads to faith.

Greene exploits the parodic nature of Cervantes, and uses it to provoke and stress comparison between the central characters and central ideas. Greene's use of parody shows the intimacy of two friends who hold divergent values. "Sancho is a 'good' communist as Quixote is a 'good' Christian, and they are clearly closer in many ways to each other than either is to his nominal party" (Spurling, p. 52). This is evident in passages such as this:

> The mayor put his hand for a moment on Father Quixote's shoulder, and Father Quixote could feel the electricity of affection in the touch. It's odd, he thought, as he steered Rocinante with undue caution round a curve, how sharing a sense of doubt can bring men together perhaps even more that sharing a faith. (p. 59)

Although Greene relies on Cervantes, Monsignor Quixote is a new vision. As a book, and momentarily considered autonomously, it possesses and asserts ideas that are unique. Don Quixote is fervent in his knightly values. He learns them by reading and he tests their validity by practising them. A reader assessing Don Quixote's actions is immediately struck with the complex relationship of fact and fiction.

Cervantes in his prologue discusses the role of the writer and his relationship with his art, he says:

But I, though in appearance Don Quixote's father, am

> really his step-father, and so will not drift with the current of custom, nor implore you, almost with tears in my eyes, as others do, dearest reader, to pardon or ignore the faults you see in this child of mine. For you are not relation or friend of his. Your soul is in your own body, and you have free will with the best of them, and are as much a lord in your own house as the king is over his taxes. For you know the old saying: under my cloak a fig for the king--all of which exempts and frees you from every respect and obligation; and so you can say anything you think fit about this story, without fear of being abused for a bad opinion, or rewarded for a good one.

The elaborate hyperbole in this prologue, I would suspect, was not unnoticed by Greene. Evident in Cervantes' invitation to read his book is an equally evident invitation to parody it. As well there is the relationship of the writer to his art. Cervantes stresses the intimacy of the relationship by humorously calling it his child, but he also evokes the possibility of the reader's taking offense over the book. He diminishes any possible misinterpretation by a reader by showing how far removed a reader is from the writer. In the process Cervantes presents the relationship of fact and fiction, melding the two in the prologue.

Conversely Greene, instead of acknowledging the fictionalization of his Quixote, makes the nature of fiction and fact a theme in the novel. Throughout the novel the veracity of Monsignor Quixote is questioned by virtually every other character, and, it follows, the

reader. Everyone wonders how a living priest can be a descendent of a fictional character. The irony is that Monsignor Quixote is a fictional character, not a living priest. Greene is of course poking fun at the reader while he poses real questions regarding the intrinsic nature of belief, fact and fiction.

Like Cervantes' book--with its debates over the nature of reality and imagination--Greene's novel debates the nature of fact and fiction. Repeatedly in the novel the Monsignor's incredible heritage is discussed. The Monsignor takes offense:

> 'Why are you always saddling me with my ancestor?'
>
> 'I was only comparing . . .'
>
> 'You talk about him at every opportunity, you pretend that my saints' books are like his books of chivalry, you compare our little adventures with his. Those Guardia were Guardia, not windmills. I am Father Quixote, and not Don Quixote. I tell you, I exist. My adventures are my own adventures, not his. I go my way--my way--not his. I have free will. I am not tethered to an ancestor who has been dead these four hundred years.'
>
> 'I am sorry, father. I thought you were proud of your ancestor. I never meant to offend,'
>
> 'Oh, I know what you think. You think my God is an illusion like the windmills. But He exists, I tell you, I don't just believe in Him. I touch Him'
>
> 'Is he soft or hard?' (p. 161)

Yet more:

'Nonsense. The man in the car is a monsignor. Monsignors don't steal money. What's your friend's name?' He asked the stranger.

'Monsignor Quixote.'

'Quixote! Impossible,' Professor Pilbeam said.

'Monsignor Quixote of El Toboso. A descendant of the great Don Quixote himself.'

'Don Quixote had no descendants. How could he? He's a fictional character.'

'Fact and fiction again, professor. So difficult to distinguish,' Father Leopoldo said. (p. 240)

Monsignor Quixote becomes autonomous only after its link with Don Quixote is firmly made. This association, though discussed throughout the novel, is unresolvable because it is, invariably, an issue that is at the very root of literature and its premise of being an art: art is not created in a vacuum, but takes its impetus and virility from acts in nature and in a tradition that is firmly established but always mutable. Parody uses art as its stimulus and tradition as its justification. Because it asserts its own ideas, parody can also be art.

Monsignor Quixote is like The Return of A.J.Raffles, because its potency relies on another text. It differs because it acknowledges the other text within its structure, creating another level of parody--a reflexive nature that attempts to rationalize its own existence. Monsignor Quixote also demonstrates that the methods and

goals of parody can create a new, subversive level of meaning.

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Chapter Four

Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party

*

"elegant brief exercise in grotesque fable . . . grimly tragi-comic" (Byatt), "perfect" (Clemons), "black work about the interior land of the mind" (Cosgrove), "moral thriller" (Gray), "comedy of manners, bad manners" (Howes), "brief fable" (Koger), "work of the author's left hand" (Penner) "overtly allegorical" (Lodge), "bleak and masterly tale" (Ratcliffe), "an artifice" (Romano), "strong flavour of parable" (Symons)

*

Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party is a curiosity in comparison to other works written by Graham Greene. Critically it has not been pigeon-holed as many of his other novels have been nor has it been overwhelmingly accepted as a notable example of Greene's writing. A partial reason for the critical dismissal of this novel lies in the critics' inability to classify it. Frequently critics note the novel's pared down style (and how this is a new element in Greene's writing) and its emphasis on the story. But, they dismiss the novel. Grahame Smith, for example, typifies the sentiments of many critics when he says "neither, [Monsignor Quixote nor Doctor Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party] . . . has the power to dislodge The Human Factor from its place as the

work which seems the culmination of Greene's career and so I have not attempted any discussion of them" (Smith, 195).

A lack of critical consensus suggests that the novel is not yet fully understood. I would add to this that it is not yet fully appreciated by many Greene scholars, because it is unlike his other works. Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party is, however, like Monsignor Quixote and The Return of A. J. Raffles; it is a parody. Unlike the others it does not have an explicit text to hold up as a parodic model. Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party is the parody of a form and it is a parody of a situation and a character. The novel parodies the form of a parable. Greene uses many elements from biblical parable, The Last Supper and, to a degree, the figure of God in Doctor Fischer. The novel is a secularized parable.

Discussion of Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party for many of its critics has been a difficult undertaking. How to interpret it in relation to the rest of Graham Greene's work is not a straight-foreword task. Critical consensus suggests the book is complicated despite the unadorned style of the writing and the simple plot used by Greene. It is difficult to reach a critical consensus because the book is a mixture of parody and parable; both of which can perplex if they are not

immediately recognized and understood.

Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party is a parable that uses elements of the parodic. Regardless of the ambiguity created by using a combination of parody and parable, Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party has a didactic outcome that is both poignant and clearly illustrated.

The title suggests that Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party has a twofold purpose and perspective: a character study and a situation. Paul O'Prey suggests that Doctor Fischer is a parody of Christ. The party is a parody of The Last Supper (O'Prey, 143). I intend to support this stance and reading.

Before exploring the nature of the parody in Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party and to appreciate the degree to which Greene parodies the form of the parable, it is expedient to reiterate some of the common characteristics of parables.

A parable is usually a short allegorical story of a familiar kind, designed to convey some truth, religious principle or moral lesson. It can be a statement or comment that conveys a meaning indirectly by use of comparison or analogy. And, like parody, it is meant to be placed beside, as is suggested by the root "para". Myth "reconciles and mediates contradiction but . . . [the

parable] introduces and underlines contradiction" (Crossan, 82).

Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party shares many of the same characteristics as parable. As well as having a didactic purpose, parables,

> "are all brief stories, displaying a sharp economy in the presentation of character/agents and plot . . . At first glance the parables appear to present a realistic picture: however, the realism is just as often exploded by an extravagance in detail and description. Further, many of the stories employ the indefinite article ('a certain man,' 'a certain city'), which gives them a marked generality in tone. (Tolbert, 17)

The form of the parable is open and able to handle multiple interpretations (Tolbert, 34). Each reader's interpretation "is the result of a fusion between the indeterminant parabolic sign and the meaning system of the interpreter. There is no one correct interpretation of a parable, though there may be limits of congruency that invalidate some readings (Tolbert, 39). The varied critical reception to Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party epitomizes how individual critics see the text: all differently. This variegation is, I would suspect, directly related to the parabolic nature of the novel. Furthermore, parables "like metaphors, are comparisons; however, while the comparison element in the metaphor is most often expressed in a single image, the comparison element in the parable arises from the total configuration

of the story" (Tolbert,43).

Parables like parodies require that a reader take the story and apply to it something in order to fully appreciate and understand the story. In the case of parody the comparison is usually with another text. In contrast, with parable the understanding of the story requires the reader to apply the story to himself. "To complete the comparison which the parable story begins or to complete the signification process of the parabolic language system, the interpreter must provide some material out of his or her own experience and concerns" (Tolbert, 50).

Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party is set in Geneva, Switzerland, the money capital of the world. It is written in a reliable first-person perspective and tells of a middle-aged man, Alfred Jones, who has recently experienced the death of his wife. But as well as experiencing love with his wife he has also recently encountered the antithesis of love, complete indifference, through his association with his father-in-law, Doctor Fischer, a man contemptuous of all humanity.

Alfred Jones is a writer. As his name implies, he has an 'everyman' quality, which is indicative of the novel's parabolic status. He works as a "translator and letter-writer in the immense chocolate factory of glass in

Vevey" (9). The book is written from his point of view as he recalls the brief time he spent with his young wife, who has died and his association with her father, Doctor Fischer.

The story begins with Jones' first meeting with Anna-Luise, unintentionally at a coffee shop. Jones left his table to relieve himself in the washroom. During his absence Anna-Luise, thinking the table was unoccupied, sat down. Greene focuses on food and eating throughout the novel. Eating together is the archetypal expression of community, epitomized in Western culture by the Last Supper. The intimacy of sharing food is on the one hand the beginning of Jones' love affair and on the other his introduction to witnessing the effects of complete bitterness, through the dinners with Doctor Fischer. Food, music, parties are all given a parodic twist. Greene uses common human pleasures to illustrate both life's simple joys as well as its complete denigration. Doctor Fischer's dinner parties are a parody of what one would commonly associate with dinner shared among friends. The book oscillates back and forth between moments of love and parties of hate.

Doctor Fischer's derision of humanity begins with his hatred of music. He cannot understand his wife's passion for music. She is driven out of their

relationship to find, enjoy, and listen to music. She chooses a man so low on the economic scale to share her musical enjoyment that Doctor Fischer's hate not only destroys the man she is having an affair with but Fischer's wife also. The experience consumes Doctor Fischer. He does not have the capacity to understand pleasures that are not monetarily driven. He spends a large part of his life testing his theory of greed among the rich, only to find that greed is, as he thought, infinite.

Critics have acknowledged the parodic associations of Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party (O'Prey and Kelly) with The Last Supper, but offer little discussion of this relationship. The bomb party is a secularized version of The Last Supper, complete with a traitor--Jones who will not participate as the Doctor wants him to. Jones wants to die, unlike the other dinner guests who just want to augment their wealth. The extent of the toadies' greed comes out when Jones and Doctor Fischer are discussing the preparations for the final party:

> 'I tell you this party is the extreme test of their greed. You suggested to Mrs Montgomery that I should give them cheques, and cheques they will have.'
>
> 'She told me they'd never accept cheques.'
>
> 'We'll see, Jones, we'll see. They will be very, very substantial. I want you here as a witness of how far they'll go.'

'Go?'

'For greed, Jones. The greed of the rich which you are never likely to know.'

'You are rich yourself.'

'Yes, but my greed--I told you before--is a different order. I want . . . ' He raised the Christmas cracker rather as the priest at midnight Mass had raised the Host, as though he intended to make a statement of grave importance to a disciple - 'This is my body.' He repeated: 'I want . . .' and lowered the cracker again (107).

Greene makes numerous comparisons in the novel between Dr. Fischer and God, as well as to Satan. Dr. Fischer embodies both. For example, when Anna Luise is describing her father to Jones, he responds to her description saying:

'You make him sound like Our Father in Heaven--his will be done on earth as it is in Heaven' (23).

Another time and in another conversation Anna Luise says,

'Thank God for that.'
'Thank Doctor Fischer,' I said, 'or is it the same thing?' (28).

He is physically described as Satan. Greene writes, "a man more or less of my age with a red moustache and hair that was beginning to lose its fire" (26).

Greene alludes to the dual nature of Doctor Fischer's character to stress the multiple effects of his pecuniary influence. He is rich and he commands the very rich. However his power is a parody of God's. It is human and based on greed, which he attributes to God. Greene writes

> 'I like to think that my greed is a little more like God's. . . .'Well, the believers and the sentimentalists say that he is greedy for our love. I prefer to think that, judging from the world he is supposed to have made, he can only be greedy for our humiliation, and that greed how could he ever exhaust? It's bottomless. The world grows more and more miserable while he twists the endless screw, though he gives us presents--for a universal suicide would defeat his purpose--to alleviate the humiliations we suffer'. (60-61)

He scorns the rich by proving his theory of greed, associating it with what he perceives as the greed of God. His hubristic pride is partially responsible for his suicide. Money, power, and influence are ineffectual in comparison with the potent, lingering effects of love. His nihilistic view of life is challenged by Jones and Steiner both of whom have a capacity to love.

Greene incorporates elements of The Last Supper to express a secular idea of love. The memory of love is, for Jones, a reason to live. There are two points of view that are expressed: if God exists, the bomb party was significant. It was the "last supper" and by it one will remember the futility of the host's request. Conversely, if God does not exist, the bomb party was an exercise in the limits of human greed. Neither position is resolved. Both interpretations stem from the parodic and the parabolic. Given the fact that people only live for the pleasures of material gain, as exemplified by Doctor

Fischer and his toadies, life is a futile exercise of small dinner parties. The alternative is to live with the memory of love, bereft of the person, but at least having experienced the emotion at some point in life, as Jones has done. Life has a purpose.

Throughout Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party, Greene uses the human body as an emblem of social deterioration. Society is diseased both inside and out. Bodily decay and mutilation are symbolic in the novel. Numerous characters are physically handicapped in some capacity. Jones, for example, has a plastic left hand. He lost his real one during the war. Two of the toadies are described in terms of their physical handicaps: Kips is shaped like the number seven (p.41) and Monsieur Belmont has a "twitch in his left eyelid" (29). In other places Greene uses physical similes to express the character's mental state: "[w]e went to sleep at last and the next day moved as slowly as a cripple" (47). Surpassing these is the symbol of toothpaste--oral decay--that reappears in several of Greene's novels. The deterioration of the body seems to reiterate the decline of the external world. The maimed individual and his physical decay is symbolic of the corrupt world. Doctor Fischer's wealth is derived from the decay of society--by the mass production of toothpaste.

Given his handicap and its symbolic associations, Jones reacts to the invitation to Doctor Fischer's party as a test. He attends the first party because he wants to test his ability to withstand corruption:

> 'A man can only be corrupted if he's corruptible.'
>
> 'And how do you know you aren't?'
>
> 'I don't. Perhaps it's a good thing to find out.'
>
> 'So you'll let him take you into a high place and show you all the kingdoms of the world.'
>
> 'I'm not Christ, and he's not Satan, and I thought we'd agreed he was God Almighty, although I suppose to the damned God Almighty looks very like Satan.'
>
> 'Oh, all right,' she said,'go and be damned.' (32)

Jones attends the party and finds out he is not corruptible. He is able to withstand because he has the ability to love. Doctor Fischer is without the ability to care for another human being. This eventually compels him to commit suicide.

Suicide is highlighted several times in the novel. Doctor Fischer, his wife and Madame Faverjon, one of the toadies, all commit suicide. Anna Luise's death, on the other hand, was altruistic and accidental. The others took their lives to escape the futility of their existence. Mrs. Fischer could not live in a world without music. At the party, all those invited are willing to risk death for the opportunity to become substantially

wealthier--all participants are prepared to kill themselves for money. The suicides are the result of the nihilistic beliefs.

Jones's attempted suicides are like the others, based on greed. He is greedy for death. Jones's attempts at killing himself are bungled because he based the first attempt on the poor research of a detective novel and because, in the second attempt Doctor Fischer's callous gifts, the crackers (one containing a bomb), are placebos. There is, in fact, no bomb. There are only blank cheques.

Anna-Luise is the only one who chooses death for altruistic reasons. She runs into a tree while skiing to avoid running into a boy injured on the ski-hill.

The first dinner party that Jones attends is in honor of Madame Faverjon, the first toady to rid "the world of [her] unnecessary presence" (55). Doctor Fischer kills himself after giving away his wealth. His act is the result of his studies of the rich. He says to Jones:

> I want to discover, Jones, if the greed of our rich friends has any limit. If there's a 'Thus for and no further.' If a day will come when they'll refuse to earn their presents (60).

When offered more money the toadies acquiesce to their greedy impulses, despite the risk of death.

Jones attempts suicide to be close to Anna-Luise, first by mixing aspirins and whiskey and then trying to

buy the last cracker at the party--the one presumed to have a bomb contained in it. Fate intervenes both times to prevent his death. He wants death because he wants love. Jones shows that people try to die for love, despite what Doctor Fischer said:

> Money makes a difference certainly. Some people will even die for money, Jones. They don't die for love except in novels (105).

Left as the only witnesses to Doctor Fischer's death, Jones and Steiner ponder over what possible ramifications his death has to their lives. Jones thinks to himself:

> I looked at the body and it had no more significance than a dead dog. This, I thought, was the bit of rubbish I had once compared in my mind with Jehovah and Satan (138).

The image of the nefarious Doctor Fischer is now pathetic --a dead dog. As is suggested by Steiner's pity Doctor Fischer was a man who lost his ability to love, which is the price of financial success and the belief in its power. Greene seems to be suggesting that genuine success is relative to love. Without love there is no success, or rather love is a form of success and redemption. Or, as Jones tells Anna-Luise:

> I think souls develop from an embryo just as we do. Our embryo is not a human being yet, it still has something of a fish about it, and the embryo soul isn't yet a soul. I doubt if small children have souls any more than dogs--perhaps that's why the Roman Catholic Church invented Limbo (81).

"Because Jones and Steiner both possess the ability to love they avoid damnation" (Kelly, 101). Even the memory of love justifies an existence, as Jones reminisces:

> I had felt Anna-Luise close to me when I held the whisky in my hand and again when I pulled the cracker with my teeth, but now I had lost all hope of ever seeing her in any future. Only if I had believed in a God could I have dreamt that the two of us would ever have that jour le plus long. It was as though my small half-belief had somehow shrivelled with the sight of Doctor Fischer's body. Evil was as dead as a dog and why should goodness have more immortality than evil? There was no longer any reason to follow Ann-Luise if it was only into nothingness. As long as I lived I could at least remember her. . . . Once as I boiled myself an egg for my supper, I heard myself repeating a line which I had heard spoken by a priest at the midnight Mass at Saint Maurice: ' As often as you do these things you shall do them in memory of me.' Death was no longer an answer--it was an irrelevance (139-40).

The biblical allusion to The Last Supper at the end of the book, while Jones is preparing himself something to eat, brings the novel back to the parodic theme of love and eating.

Parody and parable create an enigmatic depth and texture to Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party. Doctor Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party has a respectable place in the canon of Greene's writing, at the same time embodying many of his themes in a new manner. The novel is a modern retelling of a perennial story. It offers the same old messages in a new context.

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Chapter Five

The Self-Reflexive Parody in The End of the Affair

*

> Art, which is the product of ego, is not mutually exclusive from faith, which follows the surrender of ego. (Gaston, p. 50)

*

The End of the Affair is a parody unlike The Return of A.J. Raffles and Monsignor Quixote, because there is not another text that Greene is explicitly using as a parodic model. What makes it a parody, and what it is a parody of are questions for which there are no obvious answers. In The End of the Affair Greene is using parodic conventions which further suggests that the novel is part of the parodic genre. "The cynical text, the banal text, the clumsy text--all are changed when they are labelled 'parodic'. They become virtuosic displays in recognizable types of literature, sometimes generic types . . . sometimes evaluative ones" (Dane, p. 3).

The End of the Affair is a novel that demarcates a change in Greene's writing. Not only is it the first time Greene uses a first person point of view to narrate his story, but it introduces a parodic-meta-fictional dimension into his fiction. His fiction prior to the

publication of The End of the Affair dealt with themes such as theology or pursuit. This novel combines the two subjects and "furnishes the framework for a complete and artful expression of Greene's favorite subjects--pursuit and the distinction between profane and sacred love" (Kohn, p. 22). Greene approaches these subjects in the novel with parodic conventions; he adds a parodic dimension to give his favorite subjects new life and amplitude. Parody is a new vision using old models--as "everything new is born out of the death of something old" (Bakhtin, p. 142).

Critical consensus ranks this book among Greene's best, yet it is still one of the most controversial because of its use of the miraculous. Conversely, some critics, for example Neil McEwan, see the novel as a failure. There is little indifference towards the book. McEwan writes: "[s]omthing seems to have failed in Greene's sense of humor here. That may help to explain the awkward handling of the novel's miracles, and a general absence of the creative energy of the best of the earlier books" (McEwan, p. 72). But it seems to me that Greene's creativity is anything but absent, it is revitalized because of the elements of parody displayed in the novel.

The End of the Affair is the story of Maurice Bendrix a writer. With World War II as the background, the novel explores and recalls the relationship between Sarah and Maurice, who is usually referred to by his last name Bendrix. Their love affair has been over for eighteen months but is suddenly resurrected when Sarah's husband Henry serendipitously meets Bendrix and together they go for a drink in a bar. Henry tells Bendrix that he suspects Sarah is having an affair. Bendrix upon hearing this begins to revive his jealous feelings about Sarah. Henry, because of his suspicions, inquires about the services of a private detective. However, Bendrix, with malicious intentions, suggests that he will approach the detective and act as the panderer. Instead, he again falls in love with Sarah only to find out she has fallen in love with God.

Critics such as A.A. DeVitis have readily pointed out the modern devices of the novel: "the emotionally involved and therefore unreliable narrator, stream-of-consciousness, the flashback or time shift, the diary, the letter, the inner reverie, the use of dream for symbolic as well as foreshadowing purposes, and the spiritual debate" (DeVitis, p. 98). The effects of these are rarely discussed because they are enigmatic and purposely

non-conclusive.

The partial problem of pidgeon-holing the effects of this novel lies in its parodic dimensions. Judging by the close proximity of the narrator and Greene himself, the reader is given a type of self-parody. By creating a parodic element, such as making the lead character a writer, the text itself has multiple levels of connotation associated with it. Moreover, it is

> significant that a self-parody . . . describes not only the reader of other texts . . . but the parodist's own, hypothetical audience. In both satiric and ironic (reflexive) parody, the parodist shows himself to be concerned with the limits of the fictional world and the related problem of the reception of texts by the reader. (Hutcheon, p. 101)

Stemming from the character Bendrix are numerous ways in which the novel can be seen as a parody--a self-contained parody that is complete with parodic parallels within the text, for unlike the other forms of parody discussed, this novel has a meta-fictional quality that is parodic. The novel illustrates:

> the dual function of parody--to both unmask fantasy and to refunction and perpetuate it--[and] makes an advantage of what is for the scientific analyst a considerable methodological problem. For in the process of revealing the fictional nature of a discourse the parodist . . . may be provided with the material for his own fiction, in which his self as author and decoder of other texts becomes both the means to literary criticism and the subject of another world. (Rose, p. 94)

The self-reflexive qualities of <u>The End of the Affair</u>

are a type of parody. For many features in the novel there is a parodic counterpart that creates irony: Bendrix is both a reflection of Parkis and Sarah--with Parkis there are the parodic parallels in their professions, with Sarah there is her journal which is a parody of Bendrix's novel. There is the inference that art is a parody of experience, and central to the novel is the man/God relationship--Sarah represents faith and Bendrix represents scepticism and disbelief. As well, the prominent symbol of the mirror is ubiquitous in the story.

> Bendrix's story is itself a parody--what might be described as a looking-glass account--of yet another narrative. The discontinuity of chronological sequence with which Greene for the first time experiments here has as one of its technical functions the effect of locating Sarah's diary within the novel in such a way that the structure of Bendrix's narrative can be seen to echo or reflect the structure of Sarah's. (Thomas, p. 17)

The intertextuality within the text emanates from these counterparts or parallels. They illustrate how the parallels are refracted or inverted into a parodic perspective. They are repetitious with a critical self-contained distance.

The use of the first person perspective in The End of the Affair is Greene's attempt to alter his narrative technique. By choosing to use this perspective, he "was

beginning to share the view held by some of his critics that a certain repetitiveness had crept into his novels" (Thomas, p. 2). Greene, by using a first-person narrator, writes a story about a survivor; in Greene's other novels the central character usually dies. The use of first person indicates "someone who has survived the telling of his own story" (Thomas, p. 3). The repercussions of this experiment are formidable.

Intended or not, by using such a perspective and by making the protagonist a writer, Greene creates a parody of himself. Greene has made the disclaimer that the narrator is not him and that the characters should not be mistaken for real or living people, "[n]vertheless, after reading The End of the Affair one comes away with a strong impression that the alarming situation of Bendrix is at least to some extent symptomatic of the state of Greene's mind" (Gaston, p. 50).

Readers expect a story similar to, and representative of, an autobiographical account. Especially in a novel about a writer, the reader senses a part of the novelist is being represented. Instead the reader is set into an abyss, where parallels between Greene the writer and Bendrix the writer are found virtually everywhere in the book. Demonstrating one of the effects of juxtaposing

texts, counterfeit may play a preparatory role by invoking the reader's expectations of imitation. Greene intentionally and obviously manipulates the reader's expectations in the novel. Even if one reads the disclaimer, the parallels evoke predisposed ideas: a first hand account of a poignant, personal experience.

Bendrix, the "I" of the novel, "describes a world of dream and death that exists as a distortion or parody of a real world in which identity . . . is always annihilated. . . . For the invisible world reflected and parodied by the novels's love story would seem to be that of the Christian narrative whose central theme is God's readiness to suffer for his love of humanity" (Thomas, p. 16). Like that found in The Return of A.J.Raffles or in Monsignor Quixote, the parody produces a level of inference that is implicit when two texts are known to the reader. Greene uses parody to suggest the presence of God.

Parody imitates another text as a means to illustrate its own nature. If there is another text that is being parodied it would be Greene's autobiography, Ways of Escape. Both books share a concern with the how-to of character construction and with the nature of writing. The parallels between the two texts are anything but

fortuitous. Both have novelists as the lead characters and both are preoccupied with the means of translating life-experience into art. Bendrix's affair began as a parodic exercise. He was researching a character for one of his novels. Unlike Henry James, who said of a young woman that she "need only pass the mess-room windows of a Guard's barracks and look inside in order to write a novel" (p. 10), Bendrix must become personally involved. Instead of becoming involved with Henry the civil servant and the subject of his novel he becomes intimate with Sarah, Henry's wife. Henry, as Bendrix tells Sarah, was "for the purpose of copy, copy too for a character who was the ridiculous, the comic element in my book" (p.10). Henry is for Bendrix a parodic example, someone to parody into a character in a novel.

In the opening chapters of The End of the Affair Bendrix is concerned with the limitations of his art and his ability to capture accurately and truthfully experience:

> How can I make a stranger see her as she stopped in the hall at the foot of the stairs and turned to us? I have never been able to describe even my fictitious characters except by their actions. It has always seemed to me that in a novel the reader should be allowed to imagine a character in any way he chooses: I do not want to supply him with ready-made illustrations. Now I am betrayed by my own technique, for I do not want any other woman substituted for Sarah, I want the reader to see the one broad forehead and bold mouth, the conformation

of the skull. (p. 18)

Throughout the novel there is a preoccupation with self-discovery through the writing process. Bendrix, like Greene, writes as a means to organize and understand his life and what has happened to it. Bendrix says:

> I write the adjective with a sneer, and yet if I examine myself I find only admiration and trust for the conventional, like the villages one sees from the high road where cars pass, looking so peaceful in their thatch and stone, suggesting rest. (p. 19)

The parallels between Bendrix and Greene go further. While Bendrix is in the act of writing a novel, so is Greene. The action unfolds for the reader as it unfolds for the character. This perhaps is the most interesting aspect of the novel and one that it shares with many detective or spy stories. Bendrix says,

> If this book of mine fails to take a straight course, it is because I am lost in a strange region: I have not maps, I sometimes wonder whether anything that I am putting down here is true. (p. 50)

Among the devices that Greene uses in The End of the Affair are those of the spy or thriller novels--a genre of which he is considered a master (Merry, p. 155):

> Whatever else he does in the novel, Bendrix is always 'looking' or 'watching'. As a narrator, he functions as a kind of spy, not just peering out from the window of his own room but also trying to keep a 'vigil' on the 'ruined weather-house' in which Sarah still lives with Henry but from which 'neither the man nor the woman came out'. (Thomas, p. 15)

The pursuit is for Sarah's new lover, God. Greene creates a parody of a spy in the character of Parkis.

As with the other parallels in the novel Greene creates Bendrix's comic equivalent, Parkis. The story is replete with parodic comparisons between writers and detectives. In their vocations they share and use many of the same skills. For example when Bendrix goes to his first meeting with Savage, he writes:

> 'There is really nothing to go on,' I explained.
>
> 'Ah, that's my job,' Mr. Savage said. 'You just give me the mood, the atmosphere. (p. 21)
>
> . . .
>
> 'And if there's anything more you could tell me that would be relevant?' I remember Mr. Savage had said--a detective must find it as important as a novelist to amass his trivial material before picking out the right clue. But how difficult that picking out is--the release of the real subject. (p. 25)

And more,

> When I went to her house and rang the bell, I felt like an enemy--or a detective, watching her words as Parkis and his son were to watch her movements a few years later. (p. 49)
>
> . . .
>
> Even in the moment of love, I was like a police officer gathering evidence of a crime that hadn't yet been committed, and when more than seven years later I opened Parkis's letter the evidence was all there in my memory to add to my bitterness. (p. 50)

When Greene allies the detective and the novelist, he humorously infers that Parkis, for all his thorough and

well-intended investigation, is incompetent.

The first time he meets Bendrix, Parkis tries to impress him with his efficient, well-honed detective skills. As a detective, however, he makes a gross error, he is unable to recognize Bendrix as the man he is reporting on. Conversely, Bendrix does not know that the person he is pursuing is actually God. But perhaps the most serious and humorous blunder is revealed when Parkis and Bendrix discuss the name of Parkis's son:

> 'He's called Lance, is he?'
>
> 'After Sir Lancelot,sir. Of the Round Table.'
>
> 'I'm surprised. That was a rather unpleasant episode, surely.'
>
> 'He found the Holy Grail,' Mr Parkis said.
>
> 'That was Galahad. Lancelot was found in bed with Guinevere.' Why do we have this desire to tease the innocent? Is it envy? Mr Parkis said sadly, looking across at his boy as though he had betrayed him, 'I hadn't heard.' (p. 77)

The reader infers that Bendrix is, like Parkis, not fully aware of the ramifications of his situation. The reader as well sees the parodic juxtaposition of Bendrix and Parkis as indicative of Bendrix's personality; the juxtaposition becomes a means to create further depth within a character suffering from an inflated ego and self-centered point of view. For example, Bendrix says:

> There it goes again--the I,I,I, as though this were my story, and not the story of Sarah, Henry, and of

> course, that third, whom I hated without yet knowing him, or even believing in him. (p. 36)

Bendrix is looking for Sarah's lover who happens to be God.

The self-conscious narrator and the self-reflexive text perpetuate the parodic dimensions in the novel. There are times in the novel when Bendrix questions the nature of his motivations for writing and for re-pursuing Sarah. The two seem to stem from the same inspiration:

> When I began to write I said this was a story of hatred, but I am not convinced. Perhaps my hatred is really as deficient as my love. I looked up just now from writing and caught sight of my own face in a mirror close to my desk, and I thought, does hatred really look like that? (p. 56)

The self conscious awareness of the artifice involved in the creative process makes the reader sensitive to the relationship between parody and experience. Bendrix says,

> When I began that novel about the civil servant I was still interested, but when Sarah left me, I recognized my work for what it was--as unimportant a drug as cigarettes to get one through the weeks and years. If we are extinguished by death, as I still try to believe, what point is there in leaving some books behind any more than bottles, clothes or cheap jewelry? Sarah is right, how unimportant all the importance of art is. (p. 148)

Greene, through the character of Bendrix, repeatedly creates ways to refract a true vision of experience. This is perhaps most apparent in the use of mirrors, which in

themselves could be thought of as a parodic emblem. They reflect an image but with a difference.

Mirrors are everywhere in the novel. "The mirror seems to function in the novel . . . as a purely ironic emblem, an image in the light of which all human aspiration is reduced to the terms of a self-involvement which characterizes the outlook not only of the story's narrator but of everyone else in it as well" (Thomas, p. 15). The following quotations illustrate some of the more prominent references to mirrors:

> We walked back side by side, and as we opened the hall-door, I saw reflected in a mirror from an alcove two people separating as though from a kiss--one was Sarah. (p. 26)

> I don't know why I did it, unless perhaps that image in the mirror had come into my mind, for I had no intention of making love to her: I had no particular intention even of looking her up again. She was too beautiful to excite me with the idea of accessibility. (p. 31)

> I thought with hatred, she always has to show up well in her own mirror: she mixes religion with desertion to make it sound noble to herself. (p. 74)

> I had an impression, in the dusk of the hall, of a man with a handsome actor's face--a face that looked at itself too often in mirrors, a taint of vulgarity, and I thought sadly and without satisfaction, I wish she had better taste. (p. 80)

> 'It's all the same. Man made God in his own image, so it's natural he should love him. You know those distorting mirrors at fairs. Man's made a beautifying mirror too in which he sees himself lovely and powerful and just and wise. It's his idea of himself. He recognizes himself easier than in the

> distorting mirror which only makes him laugh, but how he loves himself in the other.' (p. 107)

> I couldn't tell him I envied him, carrying the mark of pain around with him like that, seeing You in the glass every day instead of this dull human thing we call beauty. (p. 122)

People are never described directly. They are usually seen and described through their mirrored reflections. Each of these passages represents Bendrix's perspective. Images are once removed from the true image, as is Greene in the narration of the text. This distance is a characteristic of parody.

The novel is also a theological parody; it is "a novel about plot making . . . not only about a novelist making a plot but about God making a plot" (Gaston, p. 51). The hunt after all is for God. The novel, then, is a theological spy parody. The parody operates on the literal level of the story and the metaphysical sense of the ideology inherent to the story. If man is made in God's image he is a parody--repetition with a critical difference. Greene characterizes the relationship between man and God as a parody. He writes:

> How twisted we humans are, and yet they say a God made us; but I find it hard to conceive of any God who is not as simple as a perfect equation, as clear as air. (p. 11)

> 'It's all the same. Man made God in his own image, so it's natural he should love him. You know those distorting mirrors at the fair. Man's made a beautifying mirror too in which he sees himself

> lovely and powerful and just and wise. It's his idea of himself. He recognizes himself easier than in the distorting mirror which only makes him laugh, but how he loves himself in the other.'(p. 107)

> And yet one cannot do without him. I can imagine a God feeling in just that way about some of us. The saints, one would suppose, in a sense create themselves. They come alive. They are capable of the surprising act or word. They stand outside the plot, unconditioned by it. But we have to be pushed around. We have the obstinacy of non-existence. We are inextricably bound to the plot, and wearily God forces us, here and there, according to his intention, characters without poetry, without free will, whose only importance is that somewhere, at some time, we help to furnish the scene in which a living character moves and speaks, providing perhaps the saints with the opportunities for their free will. (p. 186)

The parody in The End of the Affair provides complex and intriguing dimensions to the novel. A reader gains a deeper and fuller appreciation of Greene's narrative technique by examining its parodic effects. Not only does parody suggest many levels for interpretation, but it heightens the perceptive reader's enjoyment. The End of the Affair contains many intertextual surprises in its two self-contained discourses--Bendrix's and Sarah's, its mirrored images, and its parallel characters.

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CONCLUSION

Throughout his writing career Graham Greene has used different forms of parody in different literary genres. Parodic elements in The End of the Affair give the novel an enigmatic breadth, as well as an innovative narrative perspective. The parallels among the characters makes it possible to include God. Doctor Fischer of Geneva or The Bomb Party uses parody as an indictment of the present, showing in the process how little society's values have changed with time. Both Monsignor Quixote and The Return of A. J. Raffles rely on their precursors to give them an added dimension and new vitality. Once this relationship is established, a new vision is created as both of these works demonstrate.

Parody draws the reader's attention to the interdependency of art forms. Its parasitic reliance on another text--its dependence on other art--provides an opportunity for a fresh examination of an established work while it provides the environment for insight into the new work. But it also shows by its use of other thematic or subject matter how it achieves an unique autonomy. It relies on another text to give it meaning. But this meaning is not limited to the parent text. The juxtaposition of older material with the newer creates

multiple levels of discourse that draw from the strength of the past but also create a new direction for the future. Parody is "repetition with a critical distance"; it is a new vision.

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